

RUSSIAN HERITAGE

VOLUME IX, ISSUE 8.

JUNE - JULY 2005

Russian Heritage Student Ambassador Program Takes a New Direction: We Help Six American Students Travel to Russia This Summer

In the past three years *Russian Heritage* has sponsored eight Russian high school students in St. Petersburg, Florida, for periods of approximately three weeks. We have invited six top students of English and two excellent student musicians to come to our area as representatives of the best of Russian youth. They have visited schools, met with youth, and experienced much of American life, and have returned to Russia to share their experiences. So far we have only helped sponsor one American student going to Russia. This was Christina Nescio, an Eckerd student of Russian, who was able to gain valuable practice in the language and culture she was studying in the summer of 2003.

This year we decided to sponsor a number of American students going to Russia on summer programs. We identified four high school students from Palm Harbor High School who have a strong interest in Russia and Russian culture. Three of them, **Violetta Yevstigneyeva** (our *RH* youth representative), **Victor Albert**, and **Rachel Smith** were actively involved with the Student Ambassadors who came to our community these past years. The fourth student is Aaron Moorhead, who participated in the WWII Conference at St. Petersburg College in Clearwater and made a prize-winning video about Russia in WWII. These four students were participants in the St. Petersburg College study tour to Russia in May, and they will present a program at our *Russian Heritage* meeting in September.

Two college students have also received support from *Russian Heritage* as part of our Ambassador Program. **Matt Kuzemchuk**, a biology and Russian Studies major at Eckerd College, will spend two weeks in Russia this summer. **Ian Lanzillotti**, an outstanding student of Russian at University of South Florida in Tampa, will study in Russia for a more extended period of time this fall. Each of these Student Ambassadors has received an award of \$500, and we expect to hear from each of them in the future.

The Student Ambassador subcommittee of the Board, and the Board of Directors, have approved the invitation of two **Student Ambassadors of Music** to come to Florida in 2006. We will give additional details as they become available. We are also discussing what is the most appropriate way to continue our program with outstanding Russian students of English.

Fall Meeting of Russian Heritage Set for September 11, 2005

Mark your calendars. We plan to have our first meeting on September 11, with reports from some of our Student Ambassadors and others who have traveled to Russia this summer. We are planning the meeting for late afternoon, but check next the Newsletter for exact time and place.

May Meeting 2005 New Board Elected

On May 7, 2005 *Russian Heritage* held its annual meeting at the Oriental Super Buffet in Clearwater. At this meeting, a new Board of Directors was elected (see page 3 for information about those elected). The Treasurer's report indicates that we have approximately \$6,000 in our Scholarship Fund, and \$11,000 in the General Fund.

There was a brief review of our yearly activities, with some video highlights, and with a display of some photographs of our *Russian Heritage* events. Mostly we enjoyed the time in fellowship, with some looking back, and some planning for 2005-2006.

Old Russian New Year January 15, 2006

The Board of Directors of *Russian Heritage* has chosen the date for our "Old Russian New Year's Celebration". It will be on Sunday, January 15, 2006 at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. More information on times, prices, programs, etc. will appear in future Newsletters, but now is the time to mark your calendars.

We have formed committees to plan various aspects of this special evening. If you have ideas you would like to share with these committees, please contact one of the members of the Board, or send your suggestions directly to the *Russian Heritage* post office box.



Vera Olshevsky Dies at 93

Not too many people in *Russian Heritage* knew Vera Olshevsky. But she had quite a story, and it was reported in the November 2002 *Russian Heritage* Newsletter. She was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1912 into a family of a Tsarist Master Flag-maker. The family escaped to Kuokkala, Finland at the time of the Russian Revolution, and they came to the United States in 1921. Her father worked as a flag-maker in America for more than 26 years, and Vera helped him in his business. After both parents died, Vera came to St. Petersburg, Florida to live.

In 2003, as part of the 300th anniversary of St. Petersburg, Russia, Vera was interviewed for a short segment on *Russian TV* as one who had lived in both St. Petersburgs. The program was broadcast many times in Russia, and one who saw the interview was a long lost relative who was also named Vera in a city near Moscow. It turns out that she was a cousin who had been named after Vera Olshevsky, and had not been in contact since the family had moved to America. After the broadcast, Vera was reached by her cousin Vera and other relatives by phone and by mail until her recent death.

Vera had many memories and reminders of her life in Russia. One was a drawing by her father of the Tsar's Coat of Arms that was done for the 300th anniversary of the Romanov rule in 1913. We have been using a miniature version of this drawing as one of our images for *Russian Heritage*. You can see it on the cover of this Newsletter. Vera said she always enjoyed reading the Newsletter, and credits *Russian Heritage* for her family reunion.

RUSSIAN HERITAGE Officers 2005-2006

Board Chair **Zina Downen** 727-399-1713
15462 Gulf Blvd. #605, Madeira Beach, FL 33708. Email: siberial@tampabay.rr.com

President **Bill Parsons** 727-867-9148 w: 864-8235; fax: 864-7995
4220 Narvarez Way South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712. Email: parsonwh@eckerd.edu

V. President **Nadia Yevstigneyeva** 727-733-1480 w: 727-712-5247
1654 Nantucket Ct., Palm Harbor, FL 34683. Email: yevstigneyeva.nadia@spcollege.edu

Secretary **Peggy Newton** 727-347-9423
6500 5th Avenue N., St. Petersburg, FL 33710. Email: samangel@earthlink.net

Treasurer **Bernie Orlando** 727-866-0303
4830 Osprey Drive S. #303, St. Petersburg, FL 33711. Email: BORLA35476@aol.com

Members of the Board of Directors:

Members **Olga Fincher** 727-786-1574
3024 Landmark Blvd. #602, Palm Harbor, FL 34684.

Laura Flesch 941-761-1409
6904 Manatee Ave. West #14C, Bradenton, FL 34209. Email: laura.flesch@verizon.net

France Frankian 727-593-5814 w: 593-0957
14255 Rosemary Lane #8120, Largo, FL 33774. Email: france@aol.com

Vladimir Khokhlov 813-961-6597
14941 Old Pointe Road, Tampa, FL 33613. Email: vlad525@tampabay.rr.com

Sergei Novikov & Helena Kazakova 727-895-5334 w: 727-864-8059
711 Snell Isle Blvd., St. Petersburg, FL 33704. Email: novikosb@eckerd.edu

Victor Peppard 813-971-0223 w: 813-974-2012
3405 Country Woods Ct., Lutz, FL 33549. Email: vypepp@earthlink.net

Dan Price 941-722-8748
3708 70th Street E., Palmetto FL 34221 | @earthlink.net

Richard Rappaport 813-839-1691 w: 1-800-211-4114
3301 Bayshore Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33629 Email: rrappapo@tampabay.rr.com

Cynthia Scaglione 813-258-0272
2303 S. Cameron Ave., Tampa, FL 33629. Email: elizawood2001@yahoo.com

Mary Stenov 727-867-6013
254 Colony Point Drive S., St. Petersburg, FL 33705. Email: stenovfi@yahoo.com

Tatiana Vondersaar 727-321-8379
5443 4th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33707.

The Year in Review: 2004-2005

Programs sponsored by *Russian Heritage*

September 11, 2004. Fall Meeting with **Presentation by Student Ambassadors**, Natalia Krupitskaya and Maria Kiselyova, from St. Petersburg, Russia.

September 25, 2004. **Farewell Dinner for Ambassadors**. Collection for the victims of the terror in Beslan School tragedy.

November 10, 2004. Kristina Miller gives **Piano Concert** at Eckerd College. Our musical ambassador from St. Petersburg, Russia returns for an encore performance.

November 11, 2004. Two **Russian Films** shown at Eckerd College.

Bluebird of Happiness (1976). A film joint venture between US and USSR.

The War (2002). Film about the war in Chechnya.

January 15, 2005. Old Russian New Year's Celebration. One of our best parties ever, with more than 300 in attendance at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club.

CHILDREN OF THE SIEGE: LENINGRAD DURING WWIL

Survivors of the 900 Day Siege of Leningrad who were children during the war share their stories, together with lectures and presentations by scholars, documentary films and displays, and the Russian film from 1945 *Once There Was a Girl*.

January 27, 2005. Siege Conference at St. Petersburg College in Tarpon Springs.

January 31, 2005. Siege Conference at USF St. Petersburg.

February 7, 2005. Siege Conference at Eckerd College.

March 2, 2005. **Russian Heritage Balalaika Concert** featuring the St. Petersburg

Balalaika Trio (Svetlana, Vladimir, and Andrey), and Suzanne Pomerantzeff's Dance Ensemble performing Russian folk dances.

March 16-20, 2005. **30th Annual SPIFFS Folk Fair at Tropicana Field**.

Russian Holidays, Matryoshka Dolls, Folk Dancing and Folk Music, and Treasures and Souvenirs from *Vladimir's Collection*.

RUSSIAN HERITAGE WORLD WAR II FILM FESTIVAL

April 27, 2005. *The Cranes Are Flying*. (1957) Soviet Classic. SPC in Clearwater.

Song of Russia. (1944). Hollywood Film. SPC in Clearwater.

May 6, 2005. *Ballad of a Soldier*. (1960) Soviet Classic. Eckerd College.

The Star. (2002). Contemporary war thriller. Eckerd College.

May 7, 2005. **Annual Meeting and Election of Officers**. The Year in Review.

БОЛЬШОЕ СПАСИБО!

Special thanks to:

The **Officers and Board of Directors** for the planning and carrying out of an exciting year. We extend a special "thank you" to Smelia Damyanovich, Andrei Ustinov, and Elena Martinson who will be leaving the board of directors this year. We look forward to the continued good efforts of the board, joined by new board members, Dan Price and Richard Rappaport, as they plan the future.

President Bill Parsons, for his leadership in planning programs and working on the Newsletters.

Vice President Zina Downen, who served extremely well as our delegate to SPIFFS and in many other leadership roles.

Secretary Peggy Newton, for keeping accurate records of membership records, minutes of meetings, and consistent help on the Newsletter, including a series of excellent articles on Russian breeds of dogs.

Treasurer Bernie Orlando, who balanced our checkbook and kept accurate records of income and expenses.

Tatiana Vondersaar and Margo Catsimatidis, for their leadership and generosity in making our Old Russian New Year's Party such a great success.

Nadia Yevstigneyeva, who was outstanding as a leader in planning and carrying out the programs dealing with the Student Ambassadors, the WWII Conferences, and WWII film series.

Tatiana Bobrovskaya, our representative in St. Petersburg, Russia, who helped immensely with the selection and preparation of our Student Ambassadors, and who worked closely with our program, "Children of the Siege".

Violetta Yevstigneyeva, our youth representative who wrote articles for the Newsletter, helped with the Student Ambassadors Project, SPIFFS, and the Old Russian New Year's Party, and served as one of our Student Ambassadors to Russian this summer.

Suzanne Pomerantzeff, our SPIFFS person of the year, for her contribution to our Russian Heritage Balalaika Concert, and for her contributions over the past 30 years to promoting Russian Culture through the excellence of her Russian Folk Dance Ensemble.

All who participated in the planning and programs for the year!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!